



## Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

[www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org)

## News Release

For Immediate Release  
December 7, 2005

Contact:  
Amber Moore  
703.276.2772 ext. 17

### Local Teacher Recognized for Outstanding Teaching Innovation

#### Science Teacher from Desert Vista High School Selected as 2005 Presidential Award State Finalist

#### Awardees Announced in March 2006

Washington, DC – Did your teacher ever take you to a theme park or use a model of a rollercoaster to teach physics concepts in class, allow you to learn fractions and angles by building a gingerbread house, or measure force and motion on the basketball court? Highly qualified science and mathematics teachers bring these types of lessons to life for their students. One of these remarkable teachers, Birgit Musheno, a Science teacher at Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, is being rewarded for her success in using innovative methods and strategies in her classroom. Musheno has been named a state finalist for the 2005 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), the nation's highest honor for K-12 teaching in these fields.

Established by Congress in 1983, and administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation, the Presidential Awards allow for each state to select up to three mathematics and three science teachers as state finalists. From this field of state finalists, a maximum of 108 Presidential Awardees are selected representing the 50 states and four U.S. jurisdictions. Recipients of the 2005 Presidential Awards will be announced during a week of celebration events in March 2006 in Washington, DC.

When Musheno was told she was a state finalist, she said, "I was shocked and pleased. I have met so many wonderful, dedicated science teachers that it was a surprise to receive this honor."

Musheno is one of the 253 state finalists for the prestigious Presidential Award. Her teaching style is key to her success in the classroom. "I try to keep the students guessing about what they will find when they walk in to my classroom," said Musheno. "I never want them to be bored with biology. I like to find end-of-unit experiences that help students tie together several concepts, so they can see how everything is interrelated."

**-more-**

## Page 2/Presidential Award State Finalist

“Presidential Awardees represent exceptional professional models of what we are looking for in science and mathematics teachers. They are highly qualified in their fields, deeply knowledgeable about their subjects, and equipped with the methods and strategies that improve teaching and learning in science and mathematics,” said Celeste Pea, Ph.D., Program Director of Elementary, Secondary, and Informal Education programs at the National Science Foundation. “They strive to provide opportunities for their students to reach their potential in their respective schools and communities. Through this recognition, we hope to motivate similar creativity in other teachers, and to attract new recruits to the mathematics and science teaching profession.”

“After several years working in customer service, retail and marketing/advertising positions, I found myself wanting something more. I decided that with teaching, I could combine my work skills, my interest in working with people, and my abiding interest in biology. And although teaching has been a great fit for me in all of those areas, the best part is two-fold: feeling like I am in some small way making a contribution to the future, and the continuing sense of renewal and hope for humanity that working with young adults gives me,” said Musheno when asked about why she became a teacher.

The Presidential Awards are a great opportunity for the country to recognize the importance of all teachers. “The Presidential Awards are a chance to share with the public the dedication required to be a great teacher, the difference having a great teacher can make for a child, and the encouraging news that there are a lot of great science teachers out there,” added Musheno.

The goal of the Presidential Awards is to identify and recognize highly qualified teachers. As part of the recognition process, Awardees will take part in a weeklong series of networking and professional development activities in Washington, DC. In addition, each Awardee will also receive \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation. For more information about PAEMST, see forms and instructions available at: [www.paemst.org](http://www.paemst.org).